

NEWSLETTER

of the WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD DECEMBER 13 IN MADISON

The next meeting of the Wisconsin Entomological Society will be held on Saturday, December 13 at Russell Labs on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Russell Labs is located at the corner of Babcock and Linden Drives (see map on back page). Parking is available in lots adjacent to the building, with additional space one block west of Russell Labs. The meeting will begin at 1:30 PM. The program will feature our annual photo salon. Any members having slides of entomological subjects are encouraged to participate. Each entrant may submit up to five slides, labelled with the subject and name of photographer. The slides will be evaluated by the audience, which will vote to select the winning entries. The winner's name will be added to the William E. Sieker Memorial Plaque, and a print of the first place slide is added to the display in the Entomology Department office, and is also awarded to the photographer. Short presentations are tentatively scheduled. Also on the agenda is the election of officers for 1998. Nominations are welcome, and can be made at the meeting. Volunteers may contact Phil Pellitteri at the Department of Entomology, 1630 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706, or phone (608) 262-6510.

REGAL FRITILLARY NEWS FROM THE 1997 SEASON

Ann Swengel

Last winter my husband Scott predicted that Regal Fritillaries should live at Buena Vista Marsh in Portage County. Reason: it had the three characteristics our research analyses most strongly associated with midwestern Regal populations: large grassland size, topographic diversity (i.e., presence of both dry and wet grassland types), and unintensive management (i.e., infrequent haying, light grazing, or even idling, as opposed to frequent rotational burning, which is unfavorable). Less important is vegetative quality (i.e., amount of invasive weeds and brush). Furthermore, Buena Vista has an outstanding grassland bird fauna, which we've found to correlate strongly in abundance with Regals.

But I was very skeptical. Buena Vista is largely old field reverted from plowed agriculture on former marshland! In the prairie region, it's very rare to find Regals

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The Newsletter of the Wisconsin Entomological Society is published three times a year, at irregular intervals. It is provided to encourage and facilitate the exchange of information by the membership, and to keep the members informed of the activities of the organization. Members are strongly encouraged to contribute items for inclusion in the Newsletter. Please send all news items, notes, new or interesting insect records, season summaries, research requests, and report any address changes to the editor: Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562. e-mail lesferge@juno.com

outside of original unplowed prairie. Moreover, the regal has been declining in Wisconsin for several decades. As of 1996, it was known extant in only four southern areas (Columbia, Crawford, Green and Iowa Counties). It had been decades since a Regal was documented in Central Wisconsin.

Poetically, I the doubter found the first Regal individual on July 2. We totaled 309 individuals in 17 miles of formal transect surveys through August 28. We immediately speculated that St. Croix County might also still have regals, for the same reason as Buena Vista Marsh. But we had no time to check. Within a month, science teacher Jim Margenau wrote me that he had found the species there in 1996 and 1997 with his students Katie Kromer, Hannah Bakken and Katie Cari. The record was documented with a lovely photo of a female Regal.

I heartily encourage WES members to prospect for Regal Fritillaries in large landscapes of untilled grassland with topographic variation and unintensive management - and wonderful grassland birds, should you pay attention to vertebrates also! I'd sure love to hear about your results, and about any historical Regal sites, particularly if you can describe the habitat and land use.

INSECT SEASON OF 1997

Phil Pellitteri

One way to measure the season is to look at the total number of samples and calls that come into the diagnostic lab during the year. As of mid October, I was about 20% ahead of the 1996 totals. Could it be a milder winter, a more favorable spring, or the positions of the planets that has the largest influence?

Under the plague category, over one million Japanese beetles were found at a golf course in Eau Claire, and people on the west side of Madison had landscape plants defoliated by the adults. The Waukesha County, Beloit and Wisconsin Rapids populations continued to grow. Gypsy moth trap catches exceeded 85,000 with captures in every county trapped, and little chance of blow-ins from Michigan. European Earwig numbers were high for the first time in the Fox River Valley. The flying fuzz balls we call woolly alder aphids had a good year on maple trees. When they migrate onto their winter host people see "flying cotton" and wonder if they are aliens. Green stink bugs also had a big year.

Colorado potato beetles in the state have developed major resistance to home garden insecticides in the last 18 months, with only the bacterial (B.t.) products giving effective control. The old home remedy of hand picking or knocking them into a can of gasoline is coming back. The multicolored Asian lady beetles are now migrating into people's homes in large overwintering clusters. This species can live for 2-3 years, and aside from specializing in aphids on trees (it was introduced as a Pecan aphid predator in the south), there are some disturbing reports from the east coast about potential impact on Lycaenid butterfly populations.

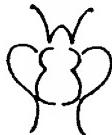
On the lighter side, the Sphingids had a good season with Catalpa Sphinx larvae being quite common and lots of late season calls about those "moths that look like hummingbirds." I had a report of Imperial moth adults in Fond du Lac and the usual Cecropia calls as the larvae were finishing up this summer. Everyone including the press was excited to hear about the strong Monarch butterfly populations. I was amazed by how many milkweed tussock moth caterpillars people found. Many people trying to rear Monarchs look at these gray larvae as an unwanted competitor.

After 20 years of being in the lab, nothing is a surprise. The good news is that over the years a wider segment of the population is getting to appreciate our six legged friends.

LEPIDOPTERA SEASON SUMMARY CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

1997 Wisconsin Lepidoptera records are wanted for inclusion in the season summary which is to appear in the next W. E. S. Newsletter. Things to report include uncommon species occurring in your area, early or late occurrences, unusual abundance or scarcity, rearing or host plant data, or flowers utilized by adults. Please indicate county, locality, and date of capture or observation, and also note if records are sight only, or documented by voucher specimens or photos. Specimens whose identities are uncertain may be brought to the December meeting for verification, or arrangements to view specimens or photos at another time may be made individually. Please send reports by January 15 to: Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562. e-mail lesferge@juno.com

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

